



Facts for Principals



NAEP can help us do a better job of educating our students.

- The President, Congress, and the United States Department of Education use NAEP to inform education policymaking.
- State leaders and educators use NAEP to evaluate their progress over time and to compare their results with the nation and other states.
- NAEP data can be used to compare student groups within your state, the nation and other states, and show where groups of students need improvement with certain concepts or subject areas.
- Teachers can use sample NAEP questions and scoring guides in their classrooms.

“NAEP is a necessary tool and way for my colleagues and me to make sure that the expectations that we have for teaching, learning, and ultimately student achievement, are where they belong.”

BRIAN DASSLER, PRINCIPAL DESIGNATE, KIPP NEW ORLEANS SCHOOLS

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is an essential measurement of student achievement in America.

NAEP—also known as **The Nation’s Report Card**—is the only nationally representative assessment of what American students know and can do in core subjects such as civics, mathematics, reading, science, U.S. history, and writing. Results are available for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, selected urban districts, and other jurisdictions.

As principals, you are essential partners in this effort. You make an important contribution by working closely with your teachers and explaining why the assessment is important. You can also help by selecting and empowering a NAEP School Coordinator, by meeting with students who will participate in the assessment, and by encouraging your students to participate and do their best. When students take part in NAEP and try their best, we get the most accurate data depicting what American students know and can do.

It's important to know that...

NAEP has measured student achievement nationally since 1969 and at the state level since 1990.

NAEP assesses fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students in mathematics and reading every two years, and other subjects in alternating years. The No Child Left Behind Act requires all states that receive Title I funds to participate in biennial mathematics and reading assessments in fourth and eighth grades.

NAEP is the only measure that allows for valid comparisons of student performance to be made across states and selected urban districts.

A state's own assessment provides information on individual student performance in that particular state. Because state-level assessments vary from state to state, their results cannot be used to compare student performance across the country. Results from NAEP can be compared, however, because portions of the same assessment are given to students in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Results for certain large districts can also be compared as part of NAEP's Trial Urban District Assessment.

NAEP is designed to cause minimal disruption of instruction. Students spend approximately 90 minutes on the assessment and are asked questions on subjects they encounter every day. Teachers do not need to prepare their students to take NAEP. Contractors with the United States Department of Education administer the test and work with your NAEP School Coordinator to schedule the test, distribute questionnaires, and inform parents, teachers, and students about the assessment.

NAEP items can be used as a helpful educational resource. Teachers can use actual NAEP items that have been released to see how their students' performance compares to the national results. Released NAEP items come with a scoring guide, sample student responses, and performance data by jurisdiction. Questions can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls/>.

NAEP is considered the gold standard of assessments. NAEP is an important assessment because of its impeccable technical quality. The assessment's frameworks are developed with input from education officials nationwide, education experts, teachers, and content specialists from around the country. All NAEP items are reviewed by states prior to their use.

"I was very impressed with its (NAEP's) implementation. It was well-prepared and thought out. All the parents, teachers, and children at the school felt very comfortable."

LINDA COBB, PRINCIPAL, WESTMORELAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, FAIRLAWN, NJ

NAEP reports on results for groups of students, rather than for individual students or schools.

NAEP assesses samples of students that represent the geographic, racial and ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity that is America's student body today. To ensure that the sample represents all students in the nation's schools, NAEP allows a broad array of accommodations for students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL) during the assessment.

More information is available online.

On the NAEP website—

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>—you can:

- Find sample questions
- Review scoring guides
- View results
- Compare results for various student groups
- Access specific information for teachers, students, and parents